



Legislation Text

File #: ORD. 2021-165, **Version:** 1

To designate the first block at the intersection of West Clay Street and East Clay Street in honor of the late Rosa Dixon Bowser. (2nd District)

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of Council, Rosa Dixon Bowser was born enslaved on January 7, 1855, in Amelia County, Virginia, and came to Richmond during grade school where she trained at the Richmond Colored Normal School through the Freedmen's Bureau; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of Council, Rosa Dixon Bowser became the first Black educator with Richmond Public Schools in 1872 and, during her career, she served as supervisor of teachers at the Baker School, taught at a local Young Men's Christian Association, and organized the precursor to the Virginia State Teachers Association, also known as the Virginia Teachers' Reading Circle, serving as president from 1890 to 1892; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of Council, Rosa Dixon Bowser was a respected community leader and was involved in several organizations including the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Industrial Home School for Colored Girls, the Virginia Manual Labor School for Colored Boys, the Richmond Woman's League, the Virginia Colored Anti-Tuberculosis League, the National Association of Colored Women, the Woman's Department of the Negro Reformatory Association, the Virginia State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, the National Federation of Afro-American Women, and the Committee on Domestic Science at the Hampton Negro Conferences; and

WHEREAS, upon information and belief of Council, among Rosa Dixon Bowser's other accomplishments and honors was being one of the first women to register to vote after the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America and having the first branch of the Richmond Public Library for patrons of color named in her honor in 1925; and

WHEREAS, Rosa Dixon Bowser passed away on February 7, 1931, and is buried in the East End Cemetery in the city of Richmond; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to memorialize Rosa Dixon Bowser’s service to education and social activism in the city of Richmond by designating the first block at the intersection of West Clay Street and East Clay Street in her honor as “Rose Dixon Bowser Branch;” and

WHEREAS, because this designation is honorary only, the provisions of sections 8-7 through 8-10 of the Code of the City of Richmond (2020), as amended, do not apply to the designation made hereby or to any signs erected pursuant to this ordinance;

NOW, THEREFORE,

THE CITY OF RICHMOND HEREBY ORDAINS:

§ 1. **Designation of Street Block for Honorary Name.** The first block at the intersection of West Clay Street and East Clay Street shall be designated in honor of Rosa Dixon Bowser as “Rose Dixon Bowser Branch,” pursuant to this ordinance.

§ 2. **Effect of Designation.** The designation of the intersection at the 00 block of West Clay Street made pursuant to this ordinance shall be honorary only, shall not replace the existing name of the road, and shall have no effect on the address of any property with an address on the designated road. The sole effect of designation pursuant to this ordinance shall be to authorize the placement of commemorative signs in accordance with this ordinance memorializing the designation in honor of the named person.

§ 3. **Administration of Ordinance.** The Department of Public Works shall implement this ordinance by installing, as soon as practicable after the adoption of this ordinance, and maintaining commemorative signs in accordance with this section. The commemorative signs shall be clearly distinct from the street signs used to identify the road in question such that a reasonable person could not conclude that the commemorative signs reflect the actual name of the road. The commemorative signs shall be affixed to any sign identifying the portion of the road designated in section 1 of this ordinance located at each end of the portion of the road designated in section 1 of this ordinance and shall bear the name “Rosa Dixon Bowser Branch,” as set forth in section 1 of this ordinance.

§ 4. **Effective Date.** This ordinance shall be in force and effect upon adoption.